

The knowledge of God and belief in him lie at the basis of the new life. "He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." One must understand clearly the character and existence of God, his nature and attributes, and must accept the fact that he will render to every man according to his works, if he would get into close relations with him in life and service. God the Father, the representative of the Godhead, must be known, as well as God the Son, the Savior, and God the Spirit, who applies the grace and regenerates the heart.

Immediately in touch with the doctrine of God, which is so little emphasized and so much taken as a mere matter of course, is the doctrine of sin, of which one hears so little these days. If the fact and nature of sin be not preached, one need not expect very pronounced ideas of God and his existence and nature. The two doctrines stand together. A wrong conception of God, for instance as love and only love, ignoring his justice and holiness, will give one a very poor idea of the inconceivable abomination of sin. And low ideas of sin, the belief in it as only a misfortune and as something which has within itself or within its punishment some remedial process, tend to depreciation of the divine nature and character.

The calamities that come again and again upon human life and happiness, touch the hearts of many and evoke the most unselfish and generous sentiment toward the afflicted. Last week Congress voted \$800,000 for the relief of the Italian sufferers. The National Red Cross Society sent out \$400,000, and on January 5, the steamer Hamburg sailed from New York with 25 tons of clothing and 13 tons of provisions to feed and clothe the starving and half naked survivors in Calabria and Sicily.

A secular paper tells us, with all seriousness, that the other day "when the people of Catania were panic-stricken the cardinal-archbishop exhorted them to be calm and promised that the body of Ste. Agatha should be carried around in procession. Ste. Agatha is regarded as the special deliverer from all scourges, and according to history, the pious inhabitants of Catania diverted the course of the lava stream in 1669, when a fearful eruption of Mount Aetna occurred, by extending the veil of Ste. Agatha towards it, thus saving the city, as the lava was turned aside near the Benedictine monastery and receded into the sea." Does the cardinal-archbishop really believe any such stuff, or is he simply following a superstitious people?

An interesting incident has been related to us by one who knows the facts in the case, as illustrating the way in which the priests sometimes delude the unwary but are occasionally caught in their own trap. A young man out in one of the Louisiana parishes wished to marry his first cousin. It is against the law of the state, but it is done all over the state among Romanists. The priests charge these couples a fee in virtue of which the blood relationship is removed (?). The

particularly intelligent young man referred to was to pay ten dollars for his wedding fee and another ten dollars for the removal of the interfering cousinship. To get the better of the priest the young man brought with him, to the marriage, also a male cousin. After the knot was tied he said to the priest that he would give him another ten dollars to take away the cousinship with the male relative. The priest said he could not do that. "Oh, then," said the young man, "I owe you only ten dollars," and he could not be induced to pay more!

In an address in Washington City, on Sunday, January 3, Mr. J. Campbell White, the secretary of the Laymen's Missionary Movement, said that the United States and Canada together last year gave \$10,061,000 to the missionary cause, an increase of more than \$1,000,000, against the previous year's record. He pointed out that the English-speaking world is giving 85 per cent of the total of \$22,000,000 annually given for the cause of evangelization, and added that revolutionary results have followed in the past two years the work of this organization, and that at the present rate of increase, instead of 4,000 missionaries from North America within the next ten years, there will be 24,000. Next September the laymen's federation is to start a campaign in Washington, which is to extend to 60 or 70 of the largest cities in the country.

We sometimes see great circular diagrams, drawn mainly in dark shades, with a modest white section, indicating the proportionate strength numerically of Paganism and Christianity. It is refreshing to see that the latest statistical tables indicate a remarkable advance in the number of adherents to Christianity in the whole world, and a corresponding reduction in the number of those that are classed as entirely heathen. Dr. Zellar, Director of the Statistical Bureau in Stuttgart, publishes estimates to the effect that of the 1,544,510,000 people in the world, 534,940,000 are Christians, 175,290,000 are Mohammedans, 10,860,000 are Jews, and 823,420,000 are heathen. Of these, 300,000,000 are Confucians, 214,000,000 are Brahmins, and 121,000,000 Buddhists, with other bodies of lesser numbers. In other words, out of every thousand of the earth's inhabitants, 346 are Christian, 114 are Mohammedan, 7 are Israelite, and 533 are of other religions. In 1885, in a table estimating the population of the world at 1,461,285,500, the number of Christians was put at 430,285,500; of Jews at 7,000,000; of Mohammedans at 230,000,000, and of heathen at 794,000,000.

The mysterious monkish ruler of Thibet, the Dalai Lama, has been for four years in China, since the expedition to Lhasa of a British force under Colonel Younghusband. He has been nominally a visitor and really a prisoner. He now returns from Peking, without temporal power, and the Chinese Imperial Government has perpetrated a joke on him in conferring a new title, "Sincere and Loyal Spreader of Civilization," the very last thing the Lama of Thibet would wish to be.